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THE ORPHEUS RELIEF

WOLTERS,¹ in discussing the example of the beautiful relief of Orpheus, Eurydice, and Hermes in the Villa Albani, calls attention to the fact that the figure of Hermes resembles closely the Attic youths as represented on the Parthenon Frieze. The head has the same profile, he says, and he goes on to point to the similarity of the small ears placed rather high on the head, and to the chiton of the Hermes, which is arranged in the same manner as in the case of several figures on the frieze. He adds that the other figures of the relief, alike in their garments and in their tender, exquisite expression, bear the stamp of Attic art of the period of highest perfection, that is to say, the relief must have come into being shortly after the Parthenon Frieze.

Furtwängler, however,² compares the relief with the Cassel torso of "Hephaistos." "Here the clinging drapery, the fall of the folds between the legs, the delicate folded hem on the thighs, and the folds on the upper arm (cf. the striking agreement between the folds on the right upper arm of the Hermes on the Albani replica and the left upper arm of the torso) are so surprisingly similar that one is inclined to assign both works to one artist," *i. e.* to Alcamenes.

No one will, I think, care to question the likeness in the treatment of the garments of the Hephaistos and of the Hermes which Furtwängler mentions. But it may be well to compare the relief a little more closely with the Parthenon Frieze. Comparing North Frieze, No. 133 (Michaelis) with

¹ *Gipsabgüsse*, no. 1198.

² *Masterpieces of Greek Sculpture*, edited by Miss Sellers, pp. 88, 89.

the Hermes, we discover that not only is the chiton treated in the same manner so far as length, girdle, *kolpos*, and texture of material is concerned, but that the pose of the body in the two cases is quite similar, except that the figure on the frieze faces left instead of right. In West Frieze, No. 23, the chiton again is handled in the same manner as in the Hermes, the character of the folds of the *kolpos* on the two figures being entirely similar. In South Frieze, No. 62, not only is the chiton the same, but the whole pose and bearing of the figure is almost identical with that of the Hermes, though to be sure the right arm of the Hermes does grasp the drapery on the right thigh, the left hand rests on the arm of the Eurydice, and the left foot is not drawn back quite so far in the walking motion.

For such cascade folds as those formed by the left end of the chlamys of Hermes where it hangs down between Hermes and Eurydice, we may look to East Frieze, No. 1, and to West Frieze, Nos. 9, 12, 23.

On the Naples example of the relief, where the end of Hermes's chlamys rests on the leg just below the right knee, we see the "selvage" edge which is so characteristic of the garments on the Parthenon Frieze; cf., for example, East Frieze, Nos. 31, 44, 45, 55.

As mentioned above, Wolters has called attention to the fact that the head of the Hermes closely resembles those of young men on the frieze. Here we may well compare South Frieze, Nos. 26 and 28; the hair of the Hermes curls; otherwise the likeness is striking enough. In fact, the Hermes might have stepped bodily out of the frieze, so close are the resemblances in all points.

In the heads of the Eurydice and the Orpheus, there is a touch of softness in the treatment and a shadow of melancholy, which form a contrast to the serene, ideal, passionless life of the frieze. This pathos seems not to be expressed simply by the attitudes and gestures of the bodies, and by the bowed position of the heads, but this shadow has crept into the faces themselves,

just as in some of the fine grave reliefs of the late fifth and early fourth centuries. Yet the pose of the head and body of Eurydice is exceedingly close to that of the "priest" of the East Frieze (Michaelis, No. 34), and the folds of the garment below the waist on Eurydice seem almost a copy from this figure of the frieze. The long straight folds over the left leg not merely present the same appearance, but also the same variation from the perpendicular, a movement to the spectator's left from the waist to the lower end of the garment. The *diploïdion* falls over and conceals the folds of the chiton along the upper portion of the right thigh of the Eurydice. The other folds over her right leg are rather more numerous than the corresponding folds of the priest's garment, and, in general, are more deeply cut. Still, this present greater depth is due in part to the fact that the relief has suffered less from the weather and the hand of time than has the frieze, and perchance to the fact that the relief is a Roman copy and the frieze is a Greek original. These folds on the Naples example bear a closer resemblance to those on the frieze than do the corresponding folds on the Albani replica. For the general effect of the *diploïdion* and *kolpos* of Eurydice's chiton, compare East Frieze, Nos. 16, 50, 54, 55, 56. In Nos. 54 and 55, the ample folds of the *diploïdion* fall and conceal the upper part of the thigh in the same manner as does the *kolpos* on Eurydice, though the opposite side of the figure is towards the spectator, and the pose in each case is different. The short folds of Eurydice's *kolpos*, as best seen in the Albani replica, at the middle and left side of the body are treated quite in the manner of the frieze. For example, the way which the hollow of a fold runs into a blunt, rounded end and thus stops can be seen on Eurydice's *kolpos* and on East Frieze, Nos. 26, 27, 38, 39, etc.

The figure of Orpheus, however, seems to have no striking counterpart in the extant portion of the frieze. The rings just below the knees (of the Albani example) suggest those on some of the horsemen; cf. South Frieze, Nos. 30, 43, etc. The artist apparently desires to suggest, in Orpheus's chiton, a

slightly finer material than in that of Hermes, but this finer material resembles that on North Frieze, No. 57.¹

The relief is sculptured quite in the manner of the frieze. The outlines of the figures are sharp and clean, cut down perpendicularly, at times almost undercut. The drapery here is less crisp, fresh, and original than in the frieze. This is in part due to the fact that we are comparing copies of an original relief with the original frieze.

Some of the points of similarity mentioned might be accounted for, not on the supposition that the artist of the relief has in the given cases copied the frieze, but from the fact that the artist in each case was imitating or idealizing nature as he saw it, the resemblances being accidental. This may be true in one or two instances, but the resemblances are too many and too exact to admit of this conclusion for the whole. We must infer that the artist of the relief was working in conscious or unconscious imitation of the Parthenon Frieze. The touch of pathos introduced in the relief points, however, to a date not earlier than the end of the fifth century as the probable date of the relief.

An artist of such strong individuality, and of such variety in the types he created as Furtwängler claims in his *Masterpieces* for Alcámenes, could not have been the artist of the relief. Great artists are hardly guilty of such bald plagiarism as we find in the relief. A similar influence of the Parthenon sculptures can be traced in a whole series of grave reliefs of the end of the fifth century, which surely cannot be ascribed to Alcámenes. The Orpheus relief must rather be rated with the best of these. Its sculptor was probably a nameless but skilful artisan. The original may well itself have stood over an Attic grave.

JOHN PICKARD.

¹ For the folds of the chlamys on the figures of Hermes and Orpheus, caused by drawing the garment together that it may be clasped on the shoulder, there is found no exact parallel on the frieze. But if one can judge from the figures as seen in Michaelis there are similar folds on the same portion of the chlamys on West Frieze, Nos. 2, 12, and on South Frieze, Nos. 10, 74.